



Office of the Director

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

14675 Lee Road
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715

18 May 1998

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, Chairman
The Honorable Robert Kerrey, Vice Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence,
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Vice Chairman:

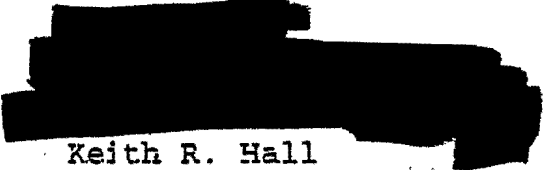
The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the declassification of the first electronic intelligence satellite, known as both GRAB and DYN0. The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) approved the declassification of the GRAB exhibition package on 29 April 1998.

The GRAB (Galactic RADIATION Background) program, run by the Naval Research Laboratory from 1958-1962, developed and flew the nation's first reconnaissance satellite. Although the "fact of" overhead signals intelligence (SIGINT) collection was declassified by the DCI on 1 December 1995, this will be the first SIGINT satellite information released to the public. Acknowledgement of this program will complement the recent release of similar information on the CORONA program, allow recognition of the pioneers responsible for the program's success, and provide a more balanced view of early United States reconnaissance efforts.

A risk assessment team of technical and security experts determined that public release of the proposed GRAB exhibit would cause no damage to national security. The hardware and associated program aspects included in the exhibit are considered obsolete and no longer sensitive. In addition, the DCI's declassification action is fully consistent with Presidential Decision Directive 49, National Space Policy.

The Commanding Officer of the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) proposed the declassification of this exhibit to support the NRL's 75th Anniversary Celebration in June 1998. This celebration at NRL will take place over 15-19 June 1998 with the lab's contributions to space being recognized specifically on 17 June 1998.

Sincerely,



Keith R. Hall